



**STATEMENT ON S. 1403, THE 21ST CENTURY CONSERVATION CORPS ACT OF 2017,
AND S. 1522, EVERY KID OUTDOORS ACT**

July 18, 2017

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Daines and Ranking Member Hirono:

The Public Lands Alliance (PLA) commends the Subcommittee on National Parks for considering two valuable, bipartisan bills: S. 1403, the 21st Century Conservation Corps Act of 2017, and S. 1522, the Every Kid Outdoors Act. These bills encourage greater stewardship of America's parks, forests, refuges, conservation areas and other public lands by enabling land managers and partners to engage more powerfully with youth and veterans. PLA urges their speedy passage by the Senate.

PLA represents more than 120 nonprofit public lands partners operating in every U.S. state, territory, and the District of Columbia. PLA members serve more than 600 public lands sites and collectively contribute over \$250 million annually to their benefit. Standing side by side with land managers and with local communities, PLA members not only see the value of youth and veterans connecting with their public lands, they also marshal private resources to create these opportunities.

S. 1522, Every Kid Outdoors Act

Since 2015, nonprofit organizations have provided substantial funding to transport 4th graders to federally managed public lands through the Every Kid in A Park program. Once on a public land, these students benefit from interpretive and educational programs that many

nonprofit organizations conduct or provide critical funding to operate. PLA supports the continuation of these initiatives through the Every Kid Outdoors Act, codifying recent successes and adopting a new moniker that reflects the multiagency scope of the program.

S. 1403, the 21st Century Conservation Corps Act of 2017

The goal of the 21st Century Conservation Corps (21CSC) is to place youth and veterans in the United States in national service positions to protect, restore, and enhance the great outdoors. PLA endorses the long-term authorization of 21CSC to tackle public lands infrastructure issues, increase stewardship opportunities for young people and veterans, and demonstrate the value of private-public partnerships to accomplishing goals.

Together, these bills ensure that a ladder of progressive engagement exists between young people and their public lands, as well as provide our fighting men and women greater opportunities to continue their service to our nation and connect with the outdoors. Nonprofit public lands partners are eager to assist their land management agencies to attract private resources to invest in these programs.

PLA appreciates your steadfast commitment to enhancing America's public lands and the experience of their hundreds of millions of visitors. These bills embody that commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Puskar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" being more prominent than the last name "Puskar".

Dan Puskar
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
The Honorable Maria Cantwell